



Nongame News



BUSINESSES INVEST IN NEW JERSEY'S WILDLIFE

New Jersey's endangered and nongame wildlife got a helping hand this year through the efforts of 5 major banks and statewide H&R Block offices. For the second year in a row these businesses have helped to inform New Jersey taxpayers that it is their donations at tax time that fund the protection, management and investigation of our more than 400 species of nongame wildlife, including 35 species in danger of extinction.

Spring/Summer 1984

The New Jersey National Bank, First National Bank of Toms River, and the Marine National Bank have distributed fliers to their combined 180,000 customers telling them about New Jersey's "Check Off for Wildlife". The Princeton Bank, Horizon Bank and statewide H&R Block offices have displayed posters and brochures in their over 215 branch offices.

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SPACE AGE TECHNOLOGY AIDS ENDANGERED FROG

Radioactive tags placed on ten Pine Barrens treefrogs by state contracted biologists will help provide information necessary to preserve the Pinelands habitats of this endangered frog.



The radioactive material used to tag the animals is encased in a silicon tube adjusted to fit around the animal's waist. The low level, short-lived radiation emitted by the isotope Chromium-51 can be tracked using a Gamma counter. Dr. Peter Morin, Rutgers University, and Joseph Freda, a graduate student at Pennsylvania State University, have been contracted by the Endangered and Nongame Species Program to conduct this study as part of a larger study of Pinelands ecosystems.

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BALD EAGLE RECOVERY PROJECT

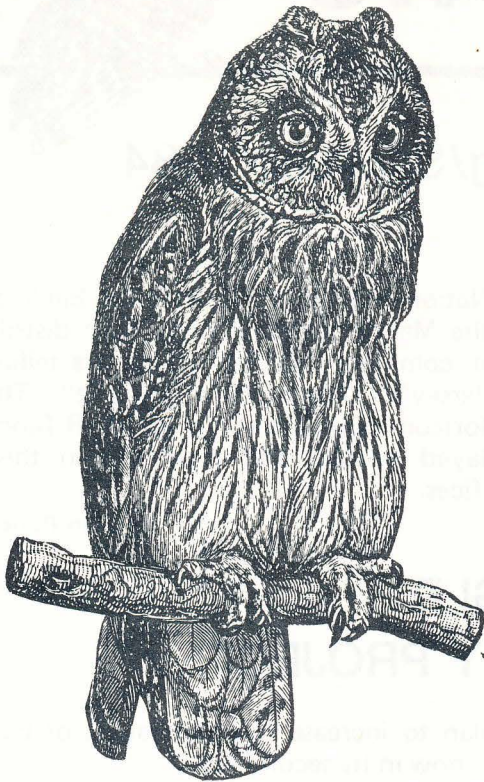
The two-phased plan to increase the population of bald eagles in the state is now in its second year.

The first phase—chick fostering—took place in April. The remaining eagle pair in South Jersey laid only one egg this year which hatched at the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's Patuxent Research station. Two chicks were returned to the nest, however—the Jersey native eaglet and a captive bred eaglet from Patuxent. For about 2 weeks, contracting observer Mark Hedden reported normal feeding and parenting behavior. Then one of the chicks suddenly disappeared. What happened to that chick remains unknown. In the meantime the other chick is being raised by the eagle pair. A contest to name the eagle chick is being run again through New Jersey schools. The "Name the Eagle Contest" has generated much interest and awareness of eagles among school children.

The second phase of the recovery project will commence in early July when up to ten Manitoba-hatched eaglets will be delivered to New Jersey. Those birds, to be provided by the Manitoba Department of Natural Resources in conjunction with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, will be raised in the "hacking" tower on Delaware Bay. Last year, four Manitoba eaglets and two eaglets from Nova Scotia were successfully raised and released from the tower.

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Endangered and Nongame Species Program



BARRED OWL BEGINNINGS

The barred owl, a year-round resident of New Jersey's woodlands, is the focus of a statewide survey being conducted by the Endangered and Nongame Species Program (ENSP) to obtain information on the occurrence and distribution of this threatened species. The survey technique uses taped barred owl vocalizations which are broadcast at dusk from a vehicle at specific points along predetermined routes. Since the bird is very vocal, the technique works well in eliciting a response from the territorial species.

The barred owl inhabits coniferous and deciduous woodlands associated with swamps, streams or lakes. The nests may be found in tree cavities, old hawk and crow nests or abandoned squirrel caches. Loss of wooded wetlands is suspected to be the cause of their decline.

Much of the information we now have regarding known barred owl locations concerns Warren, Sussex, Passaic and parts of Morris Counties in the north, and Cape May County in the south. As the study continues, the gaps in knowledge from the central counties should be filled in. Anyone with information regarding barred owl sightings is encouraged to contact Mike Valent at the Division of Fish, Game and Wildlife's Northern District Office. (201-735-5450).

PEREGRINE POPULATION IN STATE NEAR A PEAK

The Endangered and Nongame Species Program is approaching its goal this year of establishing 8-10 breeding pairs of peregrines throughout the state. All nests are located on man-made structures.

A new nesting location high in the super structure of the Commodore Barry Bridge on the New Jersey side of the Delaware River has been discovered by Endangered and Nongame Species Program and Peregrine Fund biologists. Two eggs were found in the nest on May 17th. Two specially constructed nesting boxes were placed on the bridge with assistance provided by the Delaware River Port Authority. It is hoped that the birds will utilize one of these man-made nests next year since they provide a more protected site.

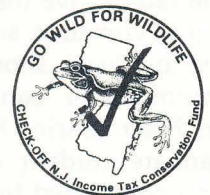
Presently in New Jersey, there are pairs of peregrines on four bridges and single birds on four other bridges. New Jersey has 17 locations where peregrines have been sighted this spring and there are now 8 nesting pairs.

1984 Status of Peregrines in New Jersey

Outerbridge Crossing - pair - no nesting
 Driscoll Bridge Parkway - single
 Mathias Bridge/Ocean Gate tower - pair - no nesting
 Sedge Island WMA tower - pair - two chicks
 Barnegat NWR tower - pair - double clutched - no recycle
 Brigantine NWR tower - pair - no nesting
 Marmora WMA tower - pair - double clutched - incubating
 Tuckahoe WMA tower - pair - incubating - double clutched
 Swan Bay WMA tower - pair - two chicks
 Heislerville WMA tower - pair - incubating
 Egg Island WMA tower - single female
 Great Bay Blvd. WMA water tower - breeding pair
 Golden Nugget Casino - single
 Brigantine Bridge - single
 Delaware Memorial Bridge - pair
 Betsy Ross Bridge - single male
 Commodore Barry Bridge - pair - incubating

Nongame News

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A BIRD IN THE GRASS

In cooperation with New Jersey Audubon, a project was begun this spring to develop and implement a statewide index of breeding birds associated with grassland and openland habitats.

The species of primary concern during this study are the upland sandpiper and vesper sparrow (both New Jersey endangered species), savannah sparrow, grasshopper sparrow and bobolink (listed as threatened species).

The northern harrier (state endangered breeding species), sedge wren (state endangered species), dickcissel (stable), Henslow's sparrow (state endangered species) and Eastern meadowlark (declining in state) will also be watched during this study. These species all represent habitat types that were once more abundant in New Jersey; their decline signals a change in the environment which is of concern to people. To conduct the study, a series of routes has been plotted throughout the state through agricultural and non-agricultural open land habitats. Each route contains between 10 and 20 points which observers stop at to listen and look for grassland songsters.

Paul Kalka, Endangered and Nongame Species Program Zoologist in charge of the project, has received enthusiastic cooperation from New Jersey Audubon volunteers. Twenty-four skilled observers have volunteered their time to conduct the investigation providing good coverage of open land habitat throughout the state.

The first half of the two year study should be completed by early July. Endangered and Nongame Species Program zoologists hope to be able to link the species studied to particular habitats in the state as well as obtain a measure of the grassland species' distribution and abundance.

LEAST TERNS BACK TO JERSEY SHORE

Pale, scantily clad sunbathers are not the only creatures which can be seen on the beach this summer vying for the attentions of the opposite sex. The least tern, one of New Jersey's endangered shorebirds has returned from Central and South America to nest in colonies along the few remaining secluded sections of N.J. beach. Many pairs have already scraped shallow depressions in the sand and the female has laid two highly camouflaged eggs. During June and July the eggs will hatch and by late August most of the young will be on their own ready for the flight south.

The least terns were a major topic of concern at the Beach Nesting Bird Workshop at Sandy Hook in late April. Participants from the National Park Service, U.S. & Wildlife Service, state universities, private institutions, and county government met to hash out research and management plans for the endangered least tern, black skimmer and piping plover.

Primary issues of concern at the workshop included effective wardening programs to alert beach goers to the nesting birds; effective predator control measures; minimizing the impact of scientists and coordinating scientific studies. Since the states beaches are under a variety of ownerships, the survival of the beach nests will depend upon a concerted effort of all concerned.

The management plan that resulted from the team effort is currently being reviewed by the participants.

All beach goers are encouraged to act as "wardens" on behalf of the endangered beach nesters. Look for the birds the next time you're at the beach and alert others to keep their distance from the dunes.

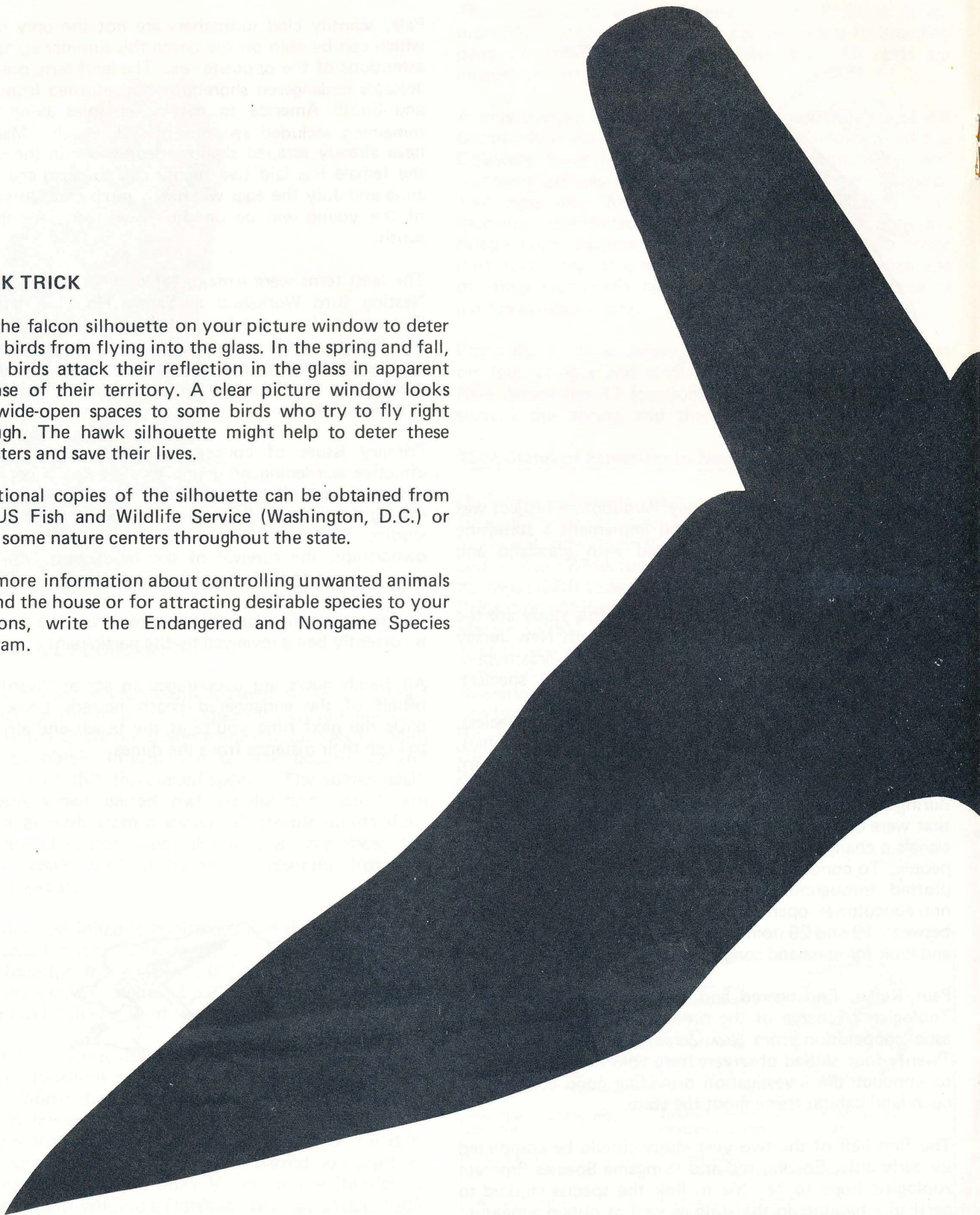


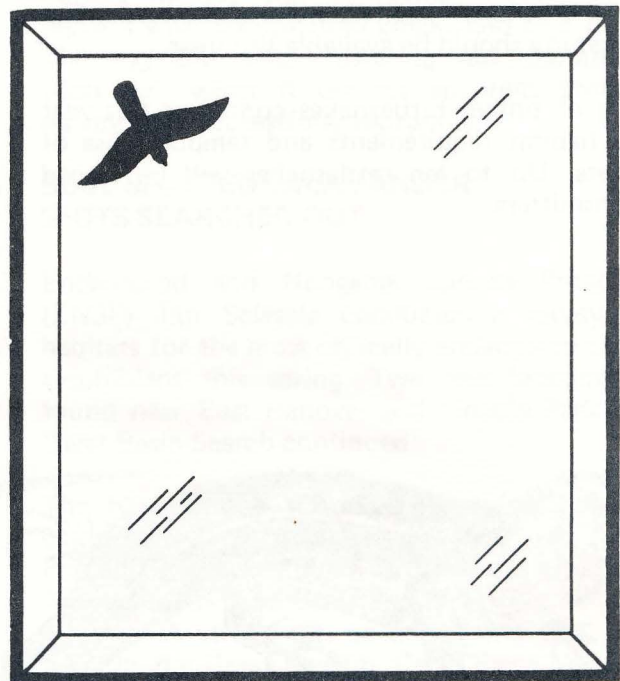
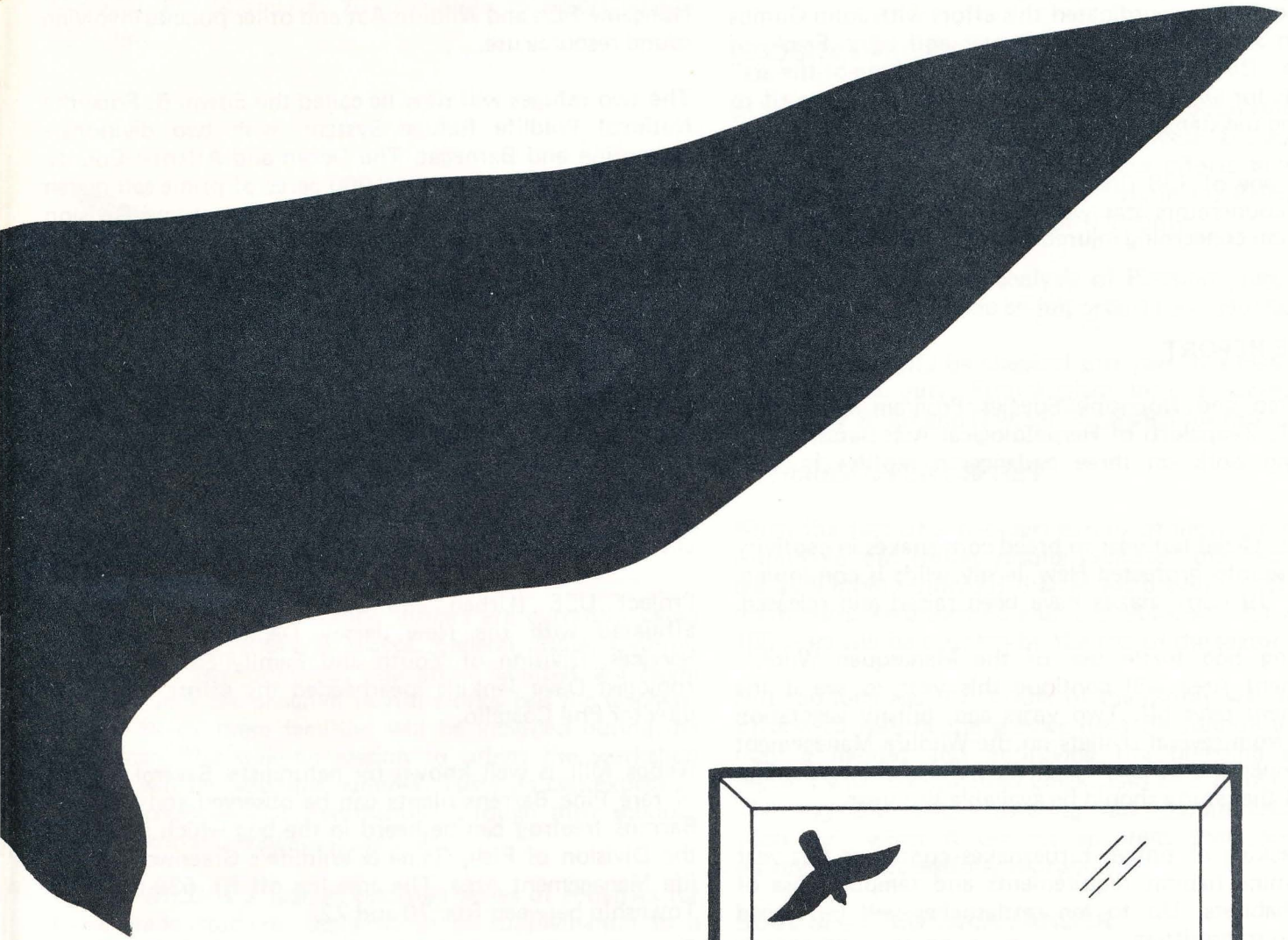
HAWK TRICK

Use the falcon silhouette on your picture window to deter small birds from flying into the glass. In the spring and fall, some birds attack their reflection in the glass in apparent defense of their territory. A clear picture window looks like wide-open spaces to some birds who try to fly right through. The hawk silhouette might help to deter these songsters and save their lives.

Additional copies of the silhouette can be obtained from the US Fish and Wildlife Service (Washington, D.C.) or from some nature centers throughout the state.

For more information about controlling unwanted animals around the house or for attracting desirable species to your environs, write the Endangered and Nongame Species Program.





NEW JERSEY "REHABBER" RECEIVES AWARD

Long-time wildlife rehabilitator Betsy Jones of Surf City, N.J. received the National Wildlife Rehabilitator Association's Achievement Award when the group met in Kalamazoo, Michigan this past spring.

Ms. Jones was cited for her efforts to save birds—1,100 birds came under her expert care last year alone. She has also been actively working to organize New Jersey rehabilitators. Jones has coordinated this effort with John Gumbs of North Jersey Raptor Care Center and Lynn Frink, of Tri-State Bird Rescue to establish "state-of-the-art" standards for all rehabbers. Jones has dedicated herself to improving the standards of care centers.

Jones is one of 138 Division of Fish, Game and Wildlife wildlife cooperators statewide who receive referrals from the division concerning injured and orphaned animals.

REPTILE REPORT

Endangered and Nongame Species Program Cooperator Robert T. Zappalorti of Herpetological Associates, Inc. is continuing work on three endangered reptiles in New Jersey.

A project started last year to breed corn snakes in captivity for release into protected New Jersey wilds is continuing. To date, 19 corn snakes have been raised and released.

Monitoring bog turtle use of the Manasquan Wildlife Management Area will continue this year to see if the management pays off. Two years ago, brushy vegetation was cut from several rivulets on the Wildlife Management Area to open the canopy for the benefit of the turtle. The results of that study should be available this year.

Radio-tracking of timber rattlesnakes continues this year to determine habitat requirements and temporal use of various habitats. Up to ten rattlesnakes will be tagged with radio-transmitters.

REFUGES RENAMED

In mid-May, the Brigantine and Barnegat National Wildlife Refuges were renamed in honor of the late Edwin B. Forsythe, a 14 year veteran of the House of Representatives, (R-13th District). The late Congressman was a ranking minority member of the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee and a long-time supporter and champion of the environment. He was instrumental in the passage of the Endangered Species Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, Nongame Fish and Wildlife Act and other policies involving sound resource use.

The two refuges will now be called the Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge System, with two divisions—Brigantine and Barnegat. The Ocean and Atlantic County System comprises nearly 40,000 acres of prime salt marsh and upland habitats. Each year, the Brigantine Division receives 200,000 visitors.

A dedication is being planned for later this year.

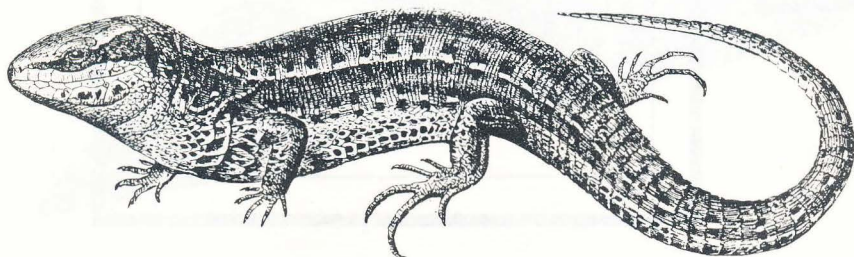
BOG TRAIL REVAMPED

Webbs Mill Bog in Ocean County is now more accessible for nature study thanks to the efforts of Project USE. In conjunction with the Endangered and Nongame Species Program (ENSP), Project USE volunteers recently completed renovations to the existing boardwalk and trail to allow people to observe wildlife without disturbing the bog.

Project USE (Urban and Suburban Environments) is affiliated with the New Jersey Department of Social Services, Division of Youth and Family Services. ENSP zoologist Dave Jenkins spearheaded the effort with USE director Phil Costello.

Webbs Mill is well known by naturalists. Several species of rare Pine Barrens plants can be observed and the Pine Barrens treefrog can be heard in the bog which is part of the Division of Fish, Game & Wildlife's Greenwood Wildlife Management Area. The area lies off Rt. 539 in Lacey Township between Rts. 70 and 72.

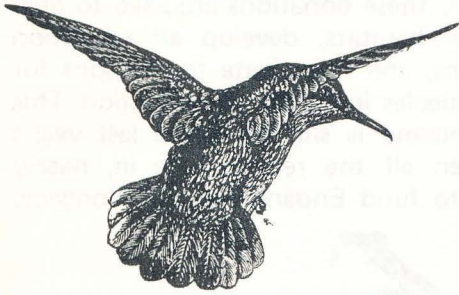
In addition to the boardwalk and trail construction, Project USE volunteers have assisted in other ENSP projects. With the aid of Project USE volunteers, the least tern colony nesting sites were cleaned up and protective fencing installed. In North Jersey, Project USE volunteers assisted in a survey of blue-spotted salamanders.



NEW ROOKERIES FOUND

Information on Great Blue Heron colonies in the state continues to come in and all reports of colonies are welcomed.

Three new rookeries of the threatened breeding species have been discovered this year. A 30-nest rookery in the Walkill Valley, a 5-nest rookery at Kittatinny Lake and a 20-nest Salem County rookery now bring the statewide total to 11 rookeries. Contact Endangered Species Program zoologist Jim Sciascia at 201-735-8975 to report colony sightings.

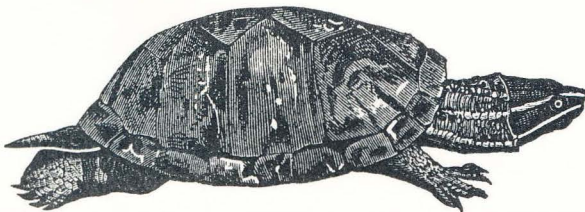


MORE ON PROJECT "WILD"

The education program we told you about in the last issue of Nongame News is quickly becoming a reality.

The Project WILD workshop leaders are currently being drawn from a variety of places. Federal, State, County, and private environmental education facilities are being asked to join the program to run workshops for teachers. About 28 of these facilities will be included during the first year. The training session to orient the workshop leaders will be held this summer. Teachers can expect to receive information on workshops through their schools, newspapers, and education journals.

Project WILD is a teacher-oriented series of activities for K-12 grade students designed to be supplemental to a variety of subject areas. The Division of Fish, Game & Wildlife's Endangered and Nongame Species Program & Information and Education section are jointly sponsoring the program. For more information contact Mimi Dunne, Bob McDowell or Bob Byrne at (201) 637-4125.



WOODRAT PROJECT

Efforts to determine the distribution and abundance of the elusive native woodrat continue this year. Dr. John Hall, contracting biologist, is directing his efforts toward pinpointing the abundance of woodrats in the Palisades and at the Picatinny Arsenal in Morris County.

Preliminary vegetation analysis of Picatinny suggests that black birch may provide an important food source.

Potential sites will be checked this year in a new location north of Picatinny. Future plans include survey of the Kittatinny Ridge and Newark Watershed for rats.

OPTIMISM OVER OSPREY

When the first of a two-part survey of nesting osprey was completed this spring, results indicated that osprey pairs are 25% more numerous than in the previous year. Eighty-seven pairs were spotted and it is expected that well over 100 pairs will be counted by the end of the season.

Not too long ago, the future of the osprey was uncertain. Efforts to restore the species have focused on improving nesting habitat and improving the breeding stock of ospreys with transplanted chicks and eggs from Maryland. The egg and chick fostering was discontinued several years ago when it became apparent that New Jersey osprey were successfully reproducing.

BLUE SPOTTED SALAMANDER SPOTS SEARCHED OUT

Endangered and Nongame Species Program zoologist (ENSP) Jim Sciascia conducted a survey of potential habitats for the most critically endangered of New Jersey's amphibians this spring. Two new breeding ponds were found near East Hanover and Lincoln Park as the Passaic River Basin Search continued.

The blue spotted salamander requires a mix of habitats comprised of woodlands and temporary ponds. In the Passaic River Basin much of the woodland which remains fringes on wetland areas and is quickly being turned into housing. A stronghold of the salamanders remains, however, in the Great Swamp, Great Piece Meadow and Troy Meadows—land which is publicly-owned.

SPACE AGE TECHNOLOGY AIDS ENDANGERED FROG

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The two-inch long, bright green treefrog uses acidic pine-lands bogs for breeding and can be easily located by its breeding call during the spring. After the six-week breeding season, the frogs become silent and their movements and habitat preferences unknown.

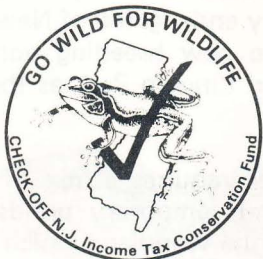
The amount of radiation that the individual frogs are being exposed to is extremely slight. The 50 rads that are emitted by the tag per month are comparable in people to one fluoroscopic scan per month. No frogs or people are being jeopardized as a result of the study.

BALD EAGLE RECOVERY PROJECT

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To the surprise and delight of all, a new eagle nest was discovered this year in South Jersey. Two adult bald eagles resided in the area and exhibited nesting behavior for about a month before dispersing. No eggs were laid. The origin of the eagles is unknown, but it is unlikely that they were products of New Jersey's restoration program. None of the restored eagles are mature yet.

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BUSINESSES INVEST IN NEW JERSEY'S WILDLIFE

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"We're very fortunate to have the support of these businesses" said JoAnn Frier-Murza, Endangered and Nongame Species Program Manager, "Without their help we could never reach such a large number of our citizens". Conservation groups and concerned individuals are also to be credited for their support of the income tax check off program.

Nineteen eighty-four marks the third year that New Jersey has had a tax check off for wildlife on their state income tax form. In just three years, concerned New Jersey taxpayers have donated in excess of 1 million dollars for programs aimed at helping such species as the bald eagle, peregrine falcon, pine barrens treefrog and the northern pine snake. In addition, these donations are used to help protect critical wildlife habitats, develop an education program for our citizens, and investigate the reasons for the decline of our 35 species in danger of extinction. This year's tax check-off income is slightly above last year's \$475,000 mark. When all the receipts are in, nearly \$500,000 is expected to fund Endangered and Nongame work.



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